Putting a vapor barrier directly over an existing basement concrete floor blocks ground moisture from rising into the room. However, if moisture or liquid water is driven upward by hydrostatic pressure from the earth, it can become trapped beneath or beneath poorly sealed seams, leading to mold growth, musty odors, and failed flooring adhesives. Polyguard +3

What Happens When You Add a Vapor Barrier

- **Moisture Blocking:** A thick plastic sheet (like 6-mil polyethylene) or specialized membrane stops water vapor from migrating through the porous concrete directly into the room. Americover +2
- **Trapped Water Risks:** If the concrete gets wet from external leaks or high ground water, sealing it tightly on top can pool water under the plastic or push it out toward the base of the walls. YouTube · ASIRI Designs
- **Adhesive and Floor Failure:** Putting vinyl, laminate, or wood straight over plastic without an air gap can ruin sensitive finishes if vapor condenses right under the surface. Polyguard +2

Best Practices for Basement Floors

- **Use an Air Gap:** Instead of flat plastic, professionals often recommend a dimpled subfloor mat (like Dricore or similar systems) which provides a vapor break while letting vapor pressure equalize beneath the finished floor.
- **Check Manufacturer Rules:** Always read the installation guide for your specific flooring type (such as luxury vinyl plank), as some require a 6-mil poly layer while others forbid it. Facebook · Island Carpet Til...
- **Seal Seams:** If you use a sheet barrier, all overlap seams must be thoroughly sealed with special moisture-resistant tape to stop localized leaks. Polyguard +2